

Testimony of Susan B. Linker
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Vice President, CT Votes for Animals

Regarding:

- **CT HB 5493—"Puppy Lemon Law," Fines for Pet Stores and Breeding Kennels**
- **CT HB 5798—Dog Tethering and Confinement**
- **CT HB 5808—Rabies Vaccination Certificates (to increase spay/neuter funding)**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, members of the Environment Committee, thank you for this opportunity to comment on bills that are before this committee. As a Connecticut voter, Chief Executive Officer of Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary in Ashford, and Vice President of CT Votes for Animals, I care deeply about the following bills.

First with respect to **the Puppy Lemon Law, HB 5493**, as a consumer and a citizen who cares about the welfare of animals, I strongly urge you to support this piece of legislation. HB5493 would improve the state's "puppy lemon law" and institute a fine scheme for pet stores and kennels, which would hold them accountable for neglect and poor standards of care. As a result, pet stores would take care to obtain healthy puppies from more humane breeding kennels. In addition to these measures, I believe strongly that additional measures should be included to address puppy mills, which are cruel breeding factories that produce the dogs sold in pet stores. These measures should require that pet shops provide consumers with full information regarding the cats and dogs' origins. This is important because many pets are sold under the misrepresentation that they are from humane breeders. Further, this bill should require that pet shops sell animals that are from kennels that are licensed by the USDA and any other appropriate state agency. As other states move to regulate the puppy mills in their states – as Pennsylvania did last year - this requirement would become increasingly meaningful.

I would also ask for your support on **HB 5798, which would institute an enforceable ban on the unreasonable tethering and confinement of dogs**. Currently the law that exists is very vague and animal control officers are not able to enforce it. As a result, dogs in our state can be chained or confined outside all day and all night. This not only is cruel to the animals but poses a public safety risk, as chained dogs are three times more likely to bite people. Finally, and I speak from experience, as an animal lover, there is nothing more heart-breaking and frustrating than to have your neighbor chain their dog outside, day and night. Neighbors are forced to witness these dogs suffer for years and bark constantly from boredom. For the welfare of our animals and the safety of our citizens, I do hope you will support this bill.

Last, I also encourage you to support **HB 5808—Rabies Vaccination Certificates (to increase spay/neuter funding)**. This bill would allow animal control officers to request a listing from veterinarians of the dogs within their towns who have received a rabies vaccination. With this information animal control officers can more efficiently enforce the current dog licensing law. Currently animal control officers must canvases door- to-door to identify citizens who have unlicensed dogs. Not only will this help enforce the dog licensing law (which is a public safety law) but it will also provide additional funding that is desperately needed by the state's animal population control program (APCP), as the APCP fund is chiefly funded by dog licensing fees.

I strongly urge you to support these three important bills. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify.